

# Loss of accreditation could put school ‘years behind’

*University system looks to spend efficiently, save money*

By ALEX McCARTHY  
JUNEAU EMPIRE

The University of Alaska Board of Regents met Friday, with the main goal of discussing how to be more efficient with its spending.

The early portion of the meeting was dominated by another storyline — that of the University of Alaska Anchorage’s School of Education losing its accreditation last week. The Council for Accreditation of Educator Programs (CAEP) revoked the School of Education’s accreditation, as the school failed to meet four of five key standards.

Regent Dale Anderson said he was trying to remain calm as he spoke to UAA Chancellor Cathy Sandeen at the meeting Friday, but his frustration was clear.

“The incompetence of either the staff, faculty or administration to have four out of five problems in this accreditation search or analysis does not add up,” Anderson said. “We have to step back and really make some changes.”

The regents agreed to hold a listening session so

students and their families could meet with regents about the situation. They’ll set a meeting for that soon.

When a school loses its accreditation, the university is no longer allowed to recommend students to the state for licensure. Teachers must have a license from the state to teach in public schools.

Alaska was having a hard enough time keeping teachers even before this. Nearly two-thirds of all teacher and administrative school positions are hired from out of state each year, according to data from the university. The university has made strides in recent years to try to turn this trend around, and aims to have 90 percent of Alaska’s new teacher hires be University of Alaska graduates. As Anderson pointed out during the meeting, the loss of accreditation “puts us years behind” in that goal specifically.

University officials and Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) officials are set to meet soon to talk about coming up with a long-term solution to the problem. DEED announced Friday that it would accept a recommendation for licensure for students in the UAA program who are graduating this spring.

Sandeen also said

they’re working with other universities to make sure students who transfer are able to have their credits transfer over.

“This is a wake-up call,” Sandeen said, “and it’s only going to make us better.”

Meanwhile, the University of Alaska Southeast is poised to undergo its own accreditation process. As part of its regular cycle of retaining its accreditation, UAS is hosting the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) in April.

UAS has been accredited since 1983, and the NWCCU’s accreditation includes all UAS campuses (in Juneau, Ketchikan and Sitka). The public can comment on UAS’ qualifications before March 22 by mailing NWCCU at 8060 165th Avenue NE, Suite 100, Redmond, WA 98052.

ing resources.

“There are things on this list that are achievable but have been plaguing us for many years,” regent Karen Perdue said during the meeting. “Hopefully with the increased collaboration across the system we can tackle these issues at last. This will only make our institution stronger.”

One other avenue toward saving money — one that affects each campus — is cutting personnel. Johnsen showed that since 2014, the university has cut 15 percent of its employees. UAS has been hit even worse than that, UAS spokesperson Keni Campbell said in an email. Campbell said UAS has lost 22 percent of its employees since 2014. That’s 143 employees, according to Johnsen’s presentation.

**Working with the governor and Legislature**

The university’s budget has shrunk in recent years, as the Alaska Legislature cuts costs. Lawmakers approved a \$10 million funding increase in 2017, the first such rise since 2014. Regents and other university officials have said that increase was helpful but insufficient to keep the University of Alaska competitive with other institutions

# Oil exploration predicted to increase on North Slope

*State will have to wait to cash in on new operations*

By ALEX McCARTHY  
JUNEAU EMPIRE

State officials on Thursday said that 2019 is expected to have the most oil exploration and production rig activity in 20 years, but it will take a while for the state to cash in on that increased investment.

In August 2018, research firm IHS Markit labeled Alaska’s North Slope as a “super basin,” and estimated that crude oil output could increase by as much as 40 percent in the next eight years. Even before that, bullish ConocoPhillips officials were declaring an “exploration renaissance” for North Slope oil.

Department of Natural Resources officials spoke to the Alaska Sen-

ate Finance Committee on Thursday, explaining their excitement about the future of oil in Alaska. DNR Deputy Commissioner Sara Longan was one of them.

“The classification of the North Slope as a super basin is a pretty big darn deal,” Longan said in an interview after the meeting, “and there’s so much undiscovered potential in Cook Inlet also, that industry’s going to keep looking at Alaska to invest money.”

Graham Smith, the permitting section manager for the Division of Oil and Gas, said in a phone interview Friday that the DNR presenters were actually fairly conservative during their Thursday presentation. They said there could be more than 15 oil rigs operating in the North Slope and Cook

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Invitation for Public Comment

University of Alaska Southeast

Full-Scale Comprehensive Accreditation Evaluation

Planned Campus Visit: April 24-26, 2019

As part of the regular cycle for reaffirmation of accreditation, the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) is scheduled for a site visit by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) in conjunction with a Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report. The visit will take place in Juneau from April 24-26, 2019.

Regional accreditation recognizes institutional quality, effectiveness, and sustainability in fulfilling the institution’s mission. UAS’ mission is: *Student learning enhanced by faculty scholarship, undergraduate research and creative activities, community engagement, and the cultures and environment of Southeast Alaska.*

UAS has been accredited by NWCCU since 1983, and this single accreditation includes all UAS campuses — Juneau, Ketchikan, and Sitka. UAS’ accreditation was last reaffirmed in 2014.

As part of the process, UAS invites public comment on its qualifications for accreditation. Signed written comments should be sent to the Commission and will be shared with the institution, the evaluation committee, and the Commission itself. Comments are due to the Commission no later than March 22, 2019.

Mail comments to: Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities  
8060 165th Avenue NE, Suite 100  
Redmond, WA 98052  
Phone: (425) 558-4224

To obtain a copy of the Commission policy go to Public Notification and Third Party Comments Regarding Year Seven Evaluations on the NWCCU website (<http://www.nwccu.org>), or contact the Commission office at (425) 558-4224.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

— Staff Report —

Juneau legislators holding town hall meeting

On the campaign trail, Juneau’s three new legislators heard from people all over the borough. Now that their service has begun, they’re ready to have a conversation with the community as a trio.

Reps. Sara Hannan and Andi Story and Sen. Jesse Kiehl are holding a town hall meeting at 5 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 29 at the Mendenhall Valley Public Library. The three Democrats are hoping to meet members of the community while also hearing some concerns and possible solutions that people have.

The event is expected to last an hour and a half, and pizza and beverages will be provided.

The legislators are settling into their offices, and their phones and emails are open for people to contact them. Hannan can be contacted at 465-4766 or Rep.Sara.Hannan@akleg.gov. Story can be reached at 465-3744 or Rep.Andi.Story@akleg.gov. People can contact Kiehl at 465-4947 or Sen. Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov.

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# Kitchen fire burns condo

By ALEX MCCARTHY  
JUNEAU EMPIRE

Fortunately for a downtown resident, the smoke alarms were working.

A neighbor at the Highland Terrace Condos in the flats called Capital City Fire/Rescue to report a smoke alarm going off next door Friday afternoon, according to a press release from Fire Marshal Dan Jager. CCFR responders arrived to find smoke coming from an apartment.

After forcing their way inside, the firefighters found combustible debris on an electric stove, the press release stated. The occupant of the apartment wasn't home at the time, and responders were able to get a dog and a cat (who were both unharmed) to safety.

Damage was estimated at about \$1,000, and the resident had renter's insurance, according to the release. Fire marshals quickly determined the fire was unintentional, and it was contained just to the stove top in the kitchen.

The small fire underscores the importance of having functional smoke alarms, Jager said.

"Had there not been a working smoke alarm, it is very likely this fire would have been much larger and caused more damage and endangered more occupants," Jager wrote in the release.



President Donald Trump walks on the South Lawn upon arrival at the White House in Washington, D.C. on Saturday after attending the casualty return at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware for the four Americans killed in a suicide bomb attack in Syria.

MANUEL BALCE CENETA | ASSOCIATED PRESS

# Trump offers a 'dreamers' deal in exchange for border wall money

By JILL COLVIN and CATHERINE LUCEY  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**WASHINGTON** — President Donald Trump sought to break the government shutdown impasse Saturday, offering to extend protections for young people brought to the country illegally as children, if Democrats

give him \$5.7 billion for his long-promised border wall. But Democrats dismissed the offer as non-starter, calling on Trump to re-open the government first.

Speaking from the White House, Trump said he was offering a "commonsense compromise both parties should embrace."

In advance of Trump's remarks, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said the expected proposal for ending the 29-day partial government shutdown was "a compilation of several previously rejected initiatives, each of which is unacceptable." The California Democrat said Trump's expected offer was "not a good-

faith effort" to help the immigrants and could not pass the House.

Trump said he would extend protections for young people brought to the country illegally as children, as well as for those with temporary protected status after fleeing countries affected by natural disasters or violence.

Democrats criticized the expected proposal because it didn't seem to be a permanent solution for those immigrants and because it includes money for the wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, which the party strongly opposes. Democrats also want Trump to reopen government before talks can start.



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## OIL:

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Inlet in 2019, but Smith said there could be up to 20 operating.

At the highest production time in 2018, Smith said, 11 rigs were running.

"That would be a high, certainly for the last 20 years, probably much longer than that," Smith said.

While senators were pleased to hear the news, they were hesitant to get overly enthusiastic. Sen. Natasha Von Imhof, R-Anchorage, said in an interview that state officials should "manage their expectations" when it comes to oil.

During her portion of the presentation, Division of Oil and Gas Director Chantal Walsh acknowledged that just because there's exploration doesn't mean money is about to come streaming in.

"Exploration, though, doesn't immediately lead to production," Walsh said. "In other words, it doesn't lead immediately to adding money to the state general fund but it is an exciting indication of the component of our state's oil and gas, which is a large part of our financial stability in the private world."

Oil revenues for the

general fund are expected to dip in the coming fiscal year from \$2.211 billion in the current year, to \$1.688 billion (23.6 percent), according to Tangeman's presentation Wednesday.

Finance Committee Chair Sen. Bert Stedman, R-Sitka, took a nonsense approach to the meeting, running it tightly and speaking frankly as he interpreted the presentations. When the DNR speakers pointed to a particular project — ConocoPhillips' Willow development on the west end of the North Slope — Stedman specifically asked when the project might start resulting in a net positive to the state.

Walsh said the project will likely start resulting in the state making money in 2026.

"So what you're telling me is I'd better not expect revenue two years from now to help us get out of this ditch," Stedman said, referring to the state's uncertain financial situation. Gov. Mike Dunleavy's first state budget included a \$1.6 billion deficit.

"That's correct," Walsh replied.

Stedman referred to the state's budget situation as "a more-than-immediate issue in the middle of the table this year and next year." During a Wednesday meeting, Stedman said this year's Senate Finance

Committee is larger than it has been in the past decade due to the complexities of the current budget situation.

The committee spent a couple days during the first week of session discussing how oil and oil prices factor into the budget process. During his Wednesday presentation to the committee, Tangeman said oil prices experience "wild swings" and that Gov. Mike Dunleavy's administration is taking a conservative approach to forecasting oil revenues. This is to avoid making an oversized budget.

Overall, though, those at Thursday's meeting came out of it with high spirits. Von Imhof said in an interview that she was encouraged by both Tangeman's presentation Wednesday and by the DNR presentations on Thursday, saying she's looking forward to bringing more jobs to the North Slope as exploration increases.

"I'm really excited about it," Von Imhof said. "I think the arrows are going in an upward direction and the leading indicators are proving positive."

• Contact reporter Alex McCarthy at 523-2271 or [amccarthy@juneauempire.com](mailto:amccarthy@juneauempire.com). Follow him on Twitter at @akmccarthy.

## REGENTS:

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across the country.

During his report at Friday's meeting, Johnsen said he and other university officials have met twice with Gov. Mike Dunleavy's administration, three times with

Office of Management and Budget Director Donna Arduin. Johnsen said he was appreciative that Dunleavy had taken the time to listen to university administrators.

The Dunleavy administration is expected to make "significant" changes to Gov. Bill Walker's final budget, Johnsen said. Dunleavy's initial budget proposal included a \$1.6 billion deficit, and John-

sen said people in his office will be keeping a close eye on what goes on at the Capitol.

Johnsen said they're also trying to meet with lawmakers, but quipped that it's difficult to tell which legislators are the most important ones to talk with because the House of Representatives still hadn't figured out its leadership as of Friday.